Restriction in stocking of wheat, pulses, etc.

297. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have imposed restrictions in stocking of wheat, pulses, etc. and if so, the details thereof;

(b) the details of surprise inspections and raids conducted on dealers of wheat and pulses to check hoarding and how many dealers have been nabbed for hoarding wheat, pulses, etc. and the action taken against them; and

(c) the details of steps taken to check prices of foodgrains, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) to (c) The Central Government has issued a Central Order No. 1373 (E) dated 29-8-2006 by virtue of which the words or expressions made in respect of purchase, movement, sale, supply, distribution or storage for sale in the "Removal of (Licensing requirements, Stock limits and Movement Restrictions) on Specified Foodstuffs Order, 2002" notified on 15-02-2002 have been kept in abeyance in respect of wheat and pulses for a period of six months or till further order, whichever is earlier. All State Governments/UTs were requested to implement this order by issuing either a fresh control order or reviving the old orders for fixing stock limits and also to take effective action using the powers vested with them under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to bring out hoarded stock of these items in the open market. While some State Governments namely, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, NCT of Delhi, West Bengal have issued Notifications reviving the stock limits for wheat and pulses, some namely, Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Pondicherry, Andaman & Nicobar, Chhattisgarh and Lakshadweep have decided not to issue any notification relating to stock limits for wheat and pulses.

Prices of essential commodities

298. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of essential commodities has almost doubled during the last two years; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) It is a fact that prices of certain essential commodities such as wheat, pulses and sugar have registered an upward trend during the past two years. The main reasons for the rise in prices are shortfall in domestic supplies relative to demand and hardening of international prices.

Improvement in PDS

299. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been no improvement in performance of public distribution system despite the various measures taken to improve efficiency, accountability and effectiveness;

(b) whether it is also a fact that efforts to innovate and reduce costs have not yielded the desired gains and the cost of decentralised procurement in many States are higher than that of the direct procurement operations of the Food Corporation of India; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to reduce the losses in PDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir. The increasing trend of offtake of foodgrains year after year shows the improvement in the performance of Public Distribution System in the country.

(Lakh tonnes)

All India basis	Offtake of foodgrains year-wise			
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07 (upto 8/06)
	239.31	293.55	311.05	127.60

(b) and (c) The scheme of decentralized procurement scheme (DPS) of foodgrains was introduced in 1997-98 with a view to enhance the efficiency of procurement and PDS and to encourage local procurement to the